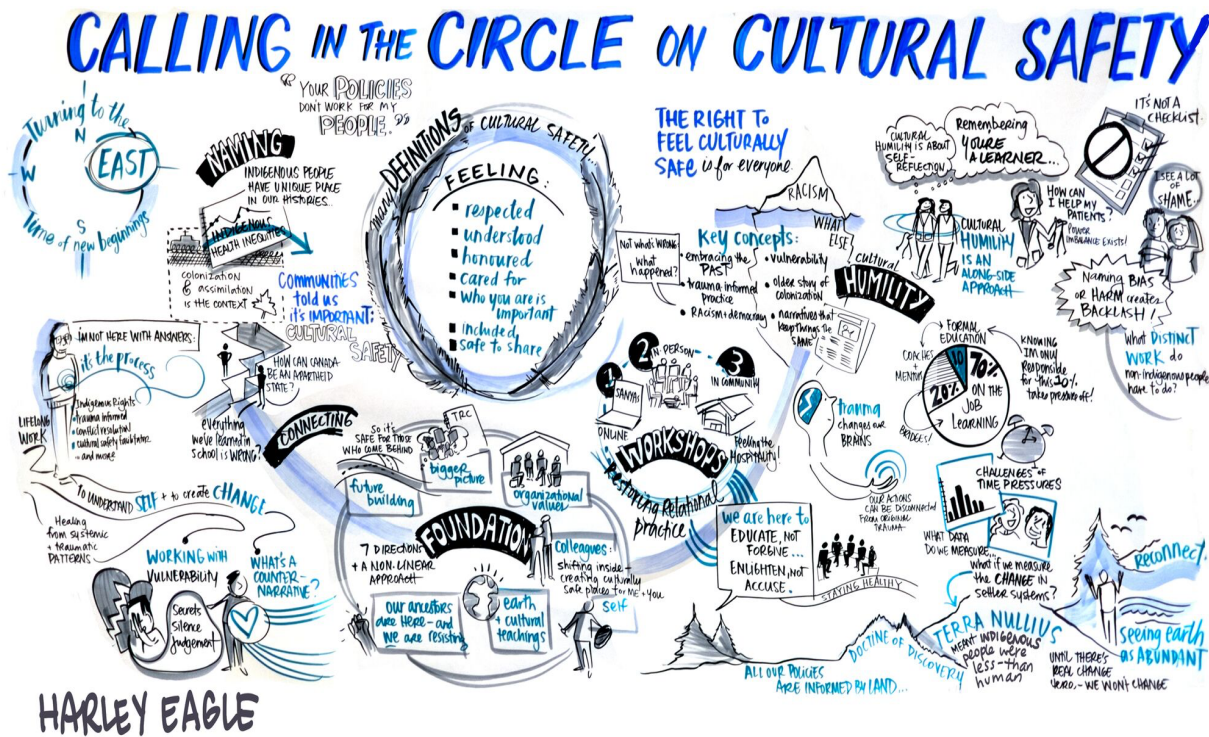


Culturally Safe Workplaces – Creating Healing Ecosystems
Federation of Community Social Services of BC – Social Policy Forum
Facilitators/Hosts: Wedliidi Speck, Jennifer Charlesworth

Follow-Up Suggestions and Resources



Calling in the Circle on Cultural Safety: May 2017

LIVE GRAPHIC RECORDING | Drawing Change
 Sam Bradd

A. Visuals

I have prepared a dropbox file with images of the 6 large posters that we referred to around the room (including the one above). These were created in May 2017 by graphic recorder Sam Bradd during a cultural safety circle gathering with 21 people from diverse backgrounds who share a keen interest in Indigenous cultural safety. To download them, click on this link and you will have access to the files. They are best if printed on 11x17 paper in colour (or larger). These are being used as conversation starters in different settings. Please let Jennifer (jencharlesworth@me.com) know how you are using them to stimulate awareness, understanding and action within your workplaces.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y041obd08thydqx/AABsSI7DPRDsHQ7rV8Jgr5cKa?dl=0>

B. Upcoming Engagement and Learning Opportunities (February)

1. Women's Memorial March, Vancouver, February 14:

<https://womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/womensmemorialmarch/>

This gathering and march begins at 10:30 am for family members and loved ones of women who have gone missing or been murdered in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The broader public is invited to join at noon, when the march will proceed through the DTES, "with stops to commemorate where women were last seen or found; speeches by community activists at Main and Hastings; a healing circle at Oppenheimer Park around 2:30 pm; and finally a community feast at the Japanese Language Hall."

If you are interested in participating, please take note of the protocols described on the website. And even if you are not able to participate it is valuable to read and understand the protocols for consideration in other contexts)

2. Stolen Sisters Memorial March, Victoria, February 17, 11am-2pm:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1963748220611242/>

3. Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) Learning Series <http://www.icscollaborative.com>

This is a monthly webinar series focused on Indigenous cultural safety. It was developed in partnership between BC's PHSA Indigenous Health and the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access, and is guided by an advisory council of Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders in BC, Ontario, Canada and internationally.

"The ICS Learning Series provides an interactive, online forum for discussion and debate on issues related to Indigenous cultural safety, and supports professionals in advocating for, developing and implementing culturally safe policy and practice in their organizations.

At each session, guest speakers present on topics related to Indigenous cultural safety, covering a wide range of areas such as: reconciliation and cultural safety; taking action to advance cultural safety in the workplace; and interrupting or responding to incidents of racism and discrimination."

Webinars are archived so you can review ones of interest. The next webinar will be held on February 22, 11:30-1 and the topic is: *Racism Hurts: Exploring the Health Impacts of Anti-Indigenous Racism*

4. Moosehide Campaign: <http://moosehidecampaign.ca>

The Moosehide Campaign was envisioned and has been led by father and daughter team of Paul and Raven Lacerte. It is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. There are many ways to engage, ranging from undertaking to wear the moosehide square, learning more about the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples and how this has contributed to gender based violence in our communities, participating in community conversations, reflecting the vision in

practice by standing up against gender-based violence, reviewing the resources available on the website and participating in the **provincial gathering and day of fasting on February 15th, 2018**:

“On Feb.15th, 2018, Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women from across the province will meet for the 7th consecutive year to stand together to end violence against women and children. As part of this day of action, thousands of men will be fasting. Everyone is invited to participate in one of these events or in their own community or organization.”

C. TED Talks

1. **Dr. Brene Brown** is a social work professor and researcher at University of Texas. She has researched shame and shame resilience, vulnerability and courage for the past 15 years and written a number of highly engaging and accessible books on the subject. Her 2 TED talks are great entry points for her work. The relevance to cultural safety is twofold:

- Self: People who are on journey of decolonization can get stuck in a place of shame as they begin to see their own complicity in the pervasive, ongoing and unquestioned impacts of colonization and privilege. Shame can stop us in our tracks as we seek to avoid the pain and protect ourselves. Brene’s work does not address decolonization or white privilege but by understanding how shame acts we can catch it and shift to the much healthier place of vulnerability which creates the much-needed space for openness, compassion, accountability and movement.
- People served: Many of the people that we serve/support carry a significant amount of shame – “there is something wrong with me, I am someone who is not... good, worthy, valuable, etc.” Direct messages of shame might have come from families of origin, caregivers, schools, service providers, etc. Shame messages might also have come indirectly, through media, social media, dominant perspectives on worthiness/unworthiness, language and identity messages. This can translate into ‘internalized oppression’. By understanding the impact of shame on the mind and sense of self/identity and value, we can appreciate the importance of working hard to create safe and non-shaming practice. This includes ways we can challenge the pervasive and often subtle stereotypes and bias so that we foster shame resiliency and also vulnerability – which leads to openness and enhances capacity for change.

Brene’s first one on Vulnerability is here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability

Her sequel, Listening to Shame is here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame.

2. Novelist **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie** delivered a beautiful TED talk in 2009 entitled *The Danger of a Single Story*. We referred to this during our presentation. She says, “Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories.” Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single

story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. We recommend this TED talk as a cultural safety resources for several reasons:

- It reminds us that the people we serve are more than the systems' labels that have been ascribed to them. What lies below the surface of appearances, case notes and behaviours is likely far richer and full of possibilities for relational practice. In the workshop, the group noted that a key marker of safety is the sense of being truly seen and heard.
- From a cultural perspective, the people that we serve might have diverse cultural backgrounds and may have been separated from their cultural stories – or have heard only negative ones. As a number of people suggested, we help to create cultural safety by accepting the fullness of the people we serve and being prepared to walk alongside them and hold the door open for them to explore the different stories within them - including stories of their cultural heritage.

See it here: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

D. Language

1. 'Calling in' Language and Concepts

We introduced the topic of 'calling in' as a way to be accountable to the intentions and aims of cultural safety while supporting one another to continue to develop cultural awareness and understanding. The ideas of "calling in" and "calling out" are worthwhile to consider. Sometimes we might need to call people out if their behavior is intentional and causing harm, but this can escalate feelings of shame or defensiveness and denial and people can become entrenched in their views = no change. If we are working together on a team and have made a commitment to helping each other on the journey towards cultural safety then "calling in" can be a lot more helpful.

My first exposure to the idea was through a blog post by Ngọc Loan Trần on the wonderfully provocative and informative blog Black Girl Dangerous see <https://www.bgdblog.org>. They write *"I picture 'calling in' as a practice of pulling folks back in who have strayed from us. It means extending to ourselves the reality that we will and do fuck up, we stray, and there will always be a chance for us to return. Calling in as a practice of loving each other enough to allow each other to make mistakes, a practice of loving ourselves enough to know that what we're trying to do here is a radical unlearning of everything we have been configured to believe is normal."* The original post has been shortened on the website so if you want to dive into this further, I recommend you go to the source article that is now published in an edited work entitled *Solidarity Struggles, 2016/*

However, here is a link to a good article on the idea:

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/guide-to-calling-in/>.

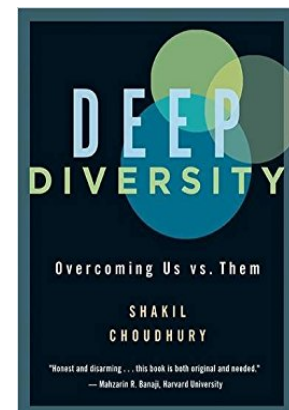


E. References on Key Topics

1. Beyond Us and Them – Deep Diversity Thinking and Practice

Canadian Shakil Choudhury has written a well-considered and accessible book that distills his learning over two decades of anti-racist and cultural diversity work. He has distilled contemporary psychological, sociological, organizational and educational literature (including Banaji's work noted below) to present a thoughtful and practical four-pillar framework for cultural connection, speaking to the experiences of diverse cultural groups and Indigenous people in Canada:

- Developing emotional literacy
- Understanding and uncovering implicit bias
- Understanding favouritism and the drive to belong
- Naming and challenging power dynamics.



2. Implicit/Unconscious Bias and its Impact

To create the conditions for cultural safety, we need to build our individual and collective cultural knowledge/awareness, sensitivity/understanding, humility and agility. One key task is to unpack the hidden biases towards 'the other' that can have a significant influence on how we see and act towards others. Alden Habacon referred to these in his talk. It is important to note that we ALL have implicit biases (also called blindspots, unconscious bias and mindbugs) that lead to judgments and prejudices. We are hard-wired to create categories and boxes to put objects, experiences and people in. Psychologist Gordon Allport talked about this human

tendency to create 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' in the 1950's. His book, *On The Nature of Prejudice*, is perhaps even more relevant to the world at this time!

On the one hand this categorization can make our lives a little easier as these 'mental heuristics' are short cuts to decision-making and action. But on the other hand, they can cause harm when we aren't even aware that these quick judgments are lurking below the surface of consciousness and are driving our thoughts and decisions. They influence human resource practices, social interactions, assessments, case planning, etc. They can affect our behavior and lead to micro-aggressions and micro-invalidations (see note below) which can really cause a lot of harm over time.

Addressing implicit bias is tough because it is operating at our unconscious level and are hidden from us. One way of shedding a bit of light on these hidden biases is to take one or more of the Implicit Association Tests (IATs) at Harvard University's Project Implicit. Please note that we do not recommend that you take the 'Native American/White IAT as it is sadly out of date. We are hoping that a new IAT that is more relevant to the Canadian context will be developed in the next year. You can access the IAT's here: <https://implicit.harvard.edu>

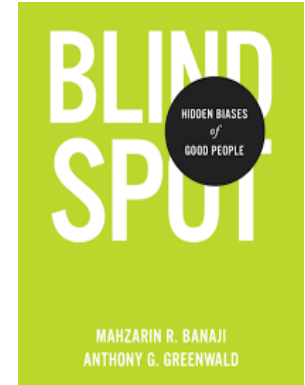
Below are a few helpful references on the subject:

Blindspot - Hidden Biases of Good People by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald (2013).

Written by the leading researchers and thinkers on implicit bias this accessible book offers extensive research and learnings about "the hidden biases we all carry from a lifetime of exposure to cultural attitudes about age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, disability status, and nationality" – and what we can do about them.

Mahzarin Banaji's recent TED-X talk is illuminating, and presents the science underlying blindspots and how they influence everyday decisions. The videographer missed some images and cut others, but you will get the main ideas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFEaCFFsM2U>



One of my favourite lines in the talk is her reference to Rumi's quote, "Each one of us is a jackass, with wings of angels tacked on." She reminds us that we will make mistakes and cause harm, but we can work to live more fully into our angel wings rather than our jackass tendencies.

Related to this, Mahzarin has founded a new initiative to help us outsmart our biased minds – see <http://outsmartinghumanminds.org> - includes podcasts, short beautiful videos and resources to help us understand and mitigate the risks of blindspots.

3. Micro-aggressions

Implicit bias can contribute to 'micro-aggressions' and 'micro-invalidations'. Micro-aggressions are described as "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment."

Here is an accessible Psychology Today article by one of the leading researchers in the area, Derald Wing Sue, that talks about what these are and how they show up: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>. There has been some recent criticism of the research on micro-aggressions, however, we still find it a useful concept to consider because we have consistently heard from Indigenous staff and clients that they regularly experience slights and snubs or hear comments that make them feel less safe and confident in workplaces.

And this buzz feed article is a great illustration of how pervasive these 'throw-away' comments pertaining to race are. Each micro-comment adds to the pot so after a while the pot can boil over. Then when the aggrieved person calls someone out for a mindless comment they are often invalidated further by comments like, "Why are you making a big deal about a little question?" Or "Chill-out" Or "You know I didn't mean anything."

https://www.buzzfeed.com/hnigatu/racial-microaggressions-you-hear-on-a-daily-basis?utm_term=.sol3oyDDRG#.vqRJkBGG2n

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If you have suggestions for other resources please share and we will update resource material.